TO: City Council Members

FROM: Gene Ranieri **DATE:** May 9, 2013 **RE:** Legislative Update

During the last two weeks the legislature has passed and sent to conference committees several policy bills as well as all but one appropriation bill. The transportation finance bill has not yet been debated on the Senate floor.

The conference committees have reviewed the bills and, in some instances, have adopted policy language. However, the funding amounts and purposes have not been determined and as a result the committees have not been able to decide appropriation levels. The funding amounts will be decided by an agreement among the Governor and the legislative leadership. The agreement has not been reached but the Governor and legislators have been meeting daily.

The following is an update on several issues included in the city's legislative program or that impact the city.

1. Transportation Finance. The Senate bill is on the floor. On Wednesday the Senate Tax Committee approved a "lights on" bill. As a "lights on" bill, there are no new initiatives - revenue or programs. The bill funds the transportation accounts at approximately the same level as the current biennium. The bill is therefore similar to the House companion.

It is possible that the bill could be changed to include additional revenue provided there is an agreement among the Governor and the legislative leadership.

- 2. Ban the Box. The House approved Rep. Mahoney's bill today by a vote of 107 to 26. The bill prohibits employers from having a question regarding criminal convictions on an employment application. Because the House bill is similar to the recently passed Senate bill, the bill has been sent to the Governor.
- 3. House Omnibus Energy Bill. The bill passed the House Tuesday night by a vote of 70 to 63. The bill includes a phased solar standard and a community solar program. Municipal Utilities and cooperatives are excluded from the solar standard as are large electricity users such as mines and paper mills. The Senate bill will be on the floor Friday.
- 4. Marriage Bill. The bill will be debated on the House floor today. The Session is scheduled to begin at noon. The Senate bill is slated for floor debate on Monday, May 13.
- 5. Tax Conference Committee. The committee has approved several items that impact the city. Among them are the following:

Target Center Property Tax Exemption

Target Center Contractor at Risk

Extension of the Hennepin County environmental response fund for 15 years.

Extension of the special service and housing improvement areas for 15 years.

6. MERF. Senator Dibble offered an amendment to require the Metropolitan Council to make contributions to MERF. The Metropolitan Council contends that a 2001 administrative agreement with the city excludes them from additional MERF payments. The amendment was withdrawn but the Pension Committee Chair Senator Sandy Pappas indicated that the issue will be an issue for interim study.